

Reflective Summary of District Office Interview

Interviewed: Marlene Wilks, Network Leader, Network 209, Cluster 2

Marlene Wilks has worked for the DOE for many years. In her capacity as Network Leader she believes that keeping her principals informed about curriculum, data analysis and citywide expectations is important to the work of educating children. During professional development and meetings you will often hear Ms. Wilks state clearly that “the work we do is a calling not just a job”. Ms. Wilks understands that leadership is challenging work but also stresses that this work serves a greater purpose. Ms. Wilks believes that in order to be an effective leader you must remember that we are all teachers first. Her passion for learning is shared across the network team and her high expectations are not only focused on the principals’ she works with but also shared with her team. Ms. Wilks is clear that leading our schools while holding true to our vision is always a priority.

In her capacity of Network Leader Ms. Wilks has put together a team that is focused and knows what it takes to educate children with diverse backgrounds and needs. Her expectation is that every member of the network is a learner, leader and teacher. Providing support to principals’ to ensure

that the expectations of meeting citywide mandates and compliance do not over shadow the work needed to provide children with a meaningful education is key. She believes that in order for schools to be successful principals must be instructional leaders that know how to teach, and continue to learn. She has developed supports that require us to build capacity by identifying leadership within our buildings. These individuals work closely with the network. Ms. Wilks believes that leaders must have autonomy over their schools. You often hear her speak about the importance of staying healthy, doing things you love and spending time with your own family. She is a true instructional leader who balances department of education expectations while maintaining integrity about what really counts on this job, our children.